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6 December 1985

Talking Points for the DCI

The war in Afghanistan this year was more intense than in previous years and the casualties on both sides were almost certainly higher. The Soviets launched major operations in Konar and Panjsher Valleys, Paktia Province and around Herat.

- We believe that two of these operations--the Panjsher Valley and Paktia Province efforts were launched primarily to prevent the insurgents from scoring major victories against Afghan regime forces.
- The other operations yielded little gain for the Soviets; insurgents continue to control large parts of Herat and important infiltration routes in Konar remain open.
- The poor performance of the Afghan Army and particularly its high desertion rate continue to cause problems for the Soviets.

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The insurgents have in our view fared well against the Soviets this year. [] they inflicted substantial casualties on the Soviets while avoiding taking crippling casualties themselves. They also:

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- Carried the war into new areas of Afghanistan. For the first time since the Soviet invasion, this year there was significant fighting in Helmand, Ghowr, and Oruzugan Provinces.
- Renewed attacks on Kabul and continue to contest regime and Soviet forces for control of Herat, Qandahar, and Mazar-e Sharif.

Supply

Insurgent supply lines remain open, despite Soviet and regime efforts to block infiltration. [] supplies are moving regularly to all parts of the country and are getting to the West and North more regularly than in past years.

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[REDACTED]

-- Three thousand horse loads of supplies were delivered into the Panjsher Valley alone during the summer of 1985,

[REDACTED]. Panjsher leader Masood's confidence in the security of his supply lines has allowed him to launch several attacks on Soviet and regime posts this month.

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-- Insurgent use of trucks to move supplies has also increased, and has facilitated the movement of supplies to the Northern provinces [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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Talking Points for the DCI's Meeting with Ambassador Abramowitz

We believe several factors enter into recent pessimistic assessments by senior Pakistani military commanders of the Afghanistan situation.

- In our view, the pessimism from front-line officials is aimed at underlining for the visiting Consultative Group (CG) members not only the constancy of Pakistan's military threat from Moscow but the added threat from increasing success at subversion by the DRA. We do not rule out the possibility that Zia may have given more or less explicit instructions to dramatize this threat. Our evidence to date suggests that DRA attempts to subvert the border tribes is, in fact, meeting with some success.
- Our recollection is that NWFP Governor Fazle Haq has tended to blame the approximately 2.5 million Afghan refugees for the historically volatile province's law and order problems. His recent discussion with members of the CG was more extreme in its pessimism but not in its general theme.

In our view the current forceful crackdown on the tribal areas in the North West Frontier's Khyber Agency could also be intended, at least in part, to demonstrate the extent of DRA mischiefmaking.

- We believe, however, that the operation's primary intent may be to signal the intention of the civilian government to address key nation-building problems; bringing the tribal areas into the mainstream of Pakistan's administrative life would be an important step in this regard.
- We believe Islamabad also sees utility in demonstrating to the US its resolve in reducing narcotics trafficking in the tribal areas while at the same time illustrating the difficulty in doing so.

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